

ISABELLA COUNTY
PLANNING COMMISSION

March 12, 2009

A Regular Meeting of the Isabella County Planning Commission was held on March 12, 2009 in Room 225 of the Isabella County Building, 200 North Main Street, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bob Thompson, Jerry Neyer, Craig Schripsema, John Benaske, Evelyn Kent, Jim Kremsreiter.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Richard Recker, Vance Johnson, Roger Trudell.

SUPPORT STAFF PRESENT: Michael Zalewski, Planner/Zoning Administrator
Brandy Freed, Recording Secretary

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Thompson at 7:03 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by the Commission.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Chair requested if there were any additions or deletions to the agenda.

A motion was made by Mr. Neyer, supported by Mr. Schripsema, to approve the agenda as submitted.

Yes: Thompson, Neyer, Schripsema, Benaske, Kent, Kremsreiter.

No: None.

Motion carried.

PREVIOUS MINUTES

Minutes of the February 12, 2009 regular meeting were circulated to the Commission prior to the meeting for their review.

A motion was made by Ms. Kent, supported by Mr. Schripsema, to approve the minutes of February 12, 2009.

Yes: Thompson, Neyer, Schripsema, Benaske, Kent, Kremsreiter.

No: None.

Motion carried.

LIASON REPORTS

Zoning Board of Appeals – Mr. Thompson reported that there were no action items on last months agenda.

TOWNSHIP CONCERNS

These township representatives were present and expressed the following concerns:

Jackie Curtis, Denver Township, stated that MTA and Michigan Farm Bureau will be having a meeting about the right to farm act and state construction code on April 6, 2009 at 7:00 pm in Harrison at the Knights of Columbus hall.

John Graham, Gilmore Township, no concerns at this time.

Bob Neeland, Isabella Township, no concerns at this time.

Tom Sunderman, Chippewa and Coe Township, no concerns at this time.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None heard.

SITE PLAN REVIEW #09-01

Mr. Zalewski explained that the applicant's grandson, Jeremy Payne, came in before the meeting and asked to have his case postponed.

A motion was made by Mr. Schripsema, supported by Mr. Neyer to postpone Site Plan Review #09-01 until the April 9, 2009 meeting.

Yes: Thompson, Neyer, Schripsema, Benaske, Kent, Kremsreiter.

No: None.

Motion carried.

MANUFACTURED HOMES PRESENTATION

Mr. Zalewski gave a presentation on manufactured homes.

Mr. Thompson asked how this issue was addressed in the 2005 draft ordinance.

Mr. Zalewski stated it was similar to what we have today; there may have been minimum width changes and size changes.

Mr. Thompson asked why our townships would become a dumping ground.

Mr. Zalewski explained that others counties and townships have different, newer standards.

Mr. Benaske asked if the standards were updated, and a person wanted to bring in a 1984 home, they would have to bring it up to the newer standard and then it would be ok to set.

Mr. Zalewski stated that would be the case if indeed the ordinance changed to the newer standards.

Mr. Neyer stated that 12' wide manufactured homes are no longer made.

Mr. Zalewski stated that 14' x 70' or 16' x 80' are the sizes that are currently manufactured. Currently our ordinance states that the manufactured home must be 1976 or newer.

Mr. Sunderman stated that they had one person come in with a manufactured home that was 14 years old and ended up having to upgrade and the one that was older, was the better of the two. The 10 year rule is much too restrictive.

Mr. Thompson stated that Sherman Township changed because they became a dumping ground. He also stated that the townships should have the chance to express their opinion on this issue.

It was the consensus of the board for staff to draft language and present it to the Planning Commission for review.

SETBACKS IN L-R DISTRICTS

Mr. Zalewski gave a presentation on setbacks in L-R Districts.

Mr. Thompson asked why the 35' or 25' setback was chosen

Mr. Zalewski stated that it is mainly for safety issues. Using numbers like these will insure that vehicles are off the road and not parked in the right of way.

Mr. Schripsema stated that normal parking spots are 19' to 20'. He also stated that the size of the right of way needs to be taken into consideration.

Mr. Zalewski stated that a 35' front setback is a substantial front setback when dealing with small lots.

Mr. Benaske asked if accessory buildings are allowed in front of the principle building.

Mr. Zalewski stated that accessory buildings are not allowed in front of the principle building in residential districts.

Mr. Neyer asked what the ZBA would like to see.

Mr. Zalewski stated that the ZBA would like to see less of these types of variances. Whatever is done will not completely eliminate all variances.

Mr. Thompson stated that there has to be some minimum on each of the sides, you have to be able to mow and maintain the property.

Mr. Schripsema stated that the minimum could be less than 25'. It still needs to be enough space to be safe. Having more green space on the lakeside is more pleasing. There should be a minimum on the sides because you have to be able to get all the way around the property. The flexibility to go a little wider would be good as well.

Mr. Thompson stated that 35' is a bit too far; 25' would be a reasonable number.

Mr. Schripsema stated that the 2nd option of 25' for a conforming lot and some compromise for a nonconforming lot. The compromise could even be an average of neighboring buildings.

Mr. Zalewski stated that the option to take the average of 5 or 6 properties is a good idea, however it could actually make the applicant increase their setback.

Mr. Schripsema stated that he likes the flexibility.

Mr. Graham stated that along the channels there are many places that you can barely drive a car down through there because of all the cars.

Mr. Schripsema stated that we are stuck with all older homes around the lakes, what do we want for the future?

Mr. Thompson stated that 8' would allow you a chance at getting through on each side.

Mr. Zalewski stated that if it was a 25' setback and change the sides to 10' and do a 20% modification automatically. The sides are now 8' and 8' and the front would go to 20' on nonconforming lots.

Mr. Schripsema stated that he likes the average better with a minimum no greater than 20, this would allow for the blending.

It was the consensus of the board for staff to draft language for a 25' front setback and 10' side setbacks with a 20% modification for nonconforming lots and present it to the Planning Commission for review.

MASTER PLAN PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

Mr. Thompson stated that he sat in on some of the township meetings and the township seemed to be well received.

Mr. Zalewski explained that staff had met with 4 townships, the others did not respond when

contacted so they were sent copies of maps and staff has since talked with them and they are ok with what the board is doing.

A motion was made by Mr. Schripsema, supported by Ms. Kent, to send the Master Plan amendment to the Board of Commissioners for review and comment. It is also recommended that they approve it for distribution.

Yes: Thompson, Neyer, Schripsema, Benaske, Kent, Kremsreiter.

No: None.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Graham stated that the building inspector currently does a final inspection when a manufactured home is set.

STAFF COMMENTS

Mr. Zalewski stated that staff received a notice of intent from the City of Clare that they will be amending their Master Plan.

PLANNING COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

Mr. Schripsema stated that the County needs to have a capital improvement program and we need to push to get it a little harder, because of the stimulus money that is going to be available. If we were farther ahead of the game, and planning what to do with the money, we wouldn't be behind the eight ball like many other communities are going to be. My personal and professional opinion is that Isabella County is behind the eight ball with knowing how to spend that money from an infrastructure and road stand point.

Mr. Thompson stated that he attended the Vision 2020 conference at Soaring Eagle Casino and Resort; it was about what the County might look like in 2020.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by the call of the chair at 8:26 p.m.

Jerry Neyer, Secretary

Brandy Freed, Recording Secretary